

6 March 1962

SUBJECT: NOTES ON POWERS CASE.

At 12:00 o'clock noon today an unclassified statement summarizing results of three weeks of intensified study of the circumstances under which Mr. Powers' U-2 plane was brought down in Soviet Russia in the vicinity of Sverdlovsk on May 1, 1960, has been released. Undoubtedly the statement has been read by you as have the numerous newspaper accounts of the incident. Therefore my purpose will be, since this information is known to you, to expand upon rather than to repeat the released information.

1. Purpose of securing Powers' release.

The purpose was two-fold; first, an understandable humanitarian desire to secure the release of a young man captured and imprisoned when acting under our direction. This has been and will continue to be our policy in other instances if they should occur. Secondly, and perhaps of greater importance to the national interest, to determine beyond a reasonable doubt if the U-2 plane was actually brought down by ground-to-air fire or otherwise at a very high altitude. If this fact was established, then the U-2 has obviously been compromised and cannot be safely used where such ~~extensive~~ ^{defensive} installations exist; if on the other hand, the investigation

we conducted would prove that the U-2 descended from altitude because of engine failure and hence finally came within reach of a Soviet fighter plane and was shot down, then the U-2 might make a further very important contribution to our national security. It is therefore in our national interest to know all ascertainable facts concerning this incident, and for that reason the Powers-Abel exchange in my opinion has served the interests of the United States.

2

Now turning to the interrogation of Powers.

1. The interrogation:

Upon Powers' return he was first carefully examined by doctors who reported that he was in good physical condition, normal mental condition, and showed no signs whatsoever of abnormalities as a result of his imprisonment or any treatment that he might have been subjected to during this period. This examination, which continued throughout the period of interrogation, was made by competent physicians, by psychiatrists and psychologists who were chosen because of their knowledge of brainwashing, truth serums and other techniques which might have been applied. *One of these specialists is present now* On the basis of these reports the Board of Inquiry and the CIA staff concluded that Powers' physical and mental condition and treatment during imprisonment would not distort his story regardless of what is was.

3

2. CIA interrogation.

We selected a team of the most competent interrogators available to us who questioned Powers intermittently over a period of five days concerning the incident and all related matters. These interrogators were chosen on the basis of their experience, most particularly their objectivity. We wanted men who to our knowledge ~~had~~ ^{were} not prejudged the case and also men skilled in ~~detection~~ ^{interrogation} techniques ~~for this type of interrogation.~~ In this respect I think the ~~the~~ executives of CIA were successful. One of the ^{at} interrogators is here to answer your questions. All conversations were recorded and transcribed and were carefully studied by the Board of Inquiry, which I will refer to later, and by a technical evaluation group established by the United States Air Force at my request to render a judgment as to whether a plane, damaged as Powers said his plane was damaged, could behave as he claimed it did behave, with the effects on the pilot which he claimed he experienced.

As the paper before you indicates, the interrogators were satisfied that Powers' story was correct, that it was supported by collateral intelligence unknown to him and that there were no contradictions which raised questions in their minds. They therefore have reported that the Powers' U-2 was damaged while flying at 68,000 feet but this information

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remains classified) and while the exact nature of the cause of the damage cannot be established, circumstances lead to the conclusion that the damage was caused by the explosion of a ground-to-air non-nuclear missile -- the explosion occurring some distance behind the plane but close enough to so impair the stabilizers as to render the plane uncontrollable.

3. Technical evaluation.

The plane then acted as reported in the paper before you and Powers was exposed to forces of gravity which explains his difficulties throughout the descent. *This has been carefully examined by experts* The loss of control, the nosing over of the plane, the tearing off of the wings, the inverted ~~spiral~~ ^{spin} assumed by the fuselage and the remaining parts of the plane, and the gravity forces on the pilot have all been studied by competent aerodynamicists and aeronautical engineers who report that these events all would occur in the manner described by Mr. Powers. In other words, there was no inconsistency between what Mr. Powers said happened and what scientists feel would happen under such circumstances.

A further point that has been examined is the extent of damage of the remnants of the plane. Some have stated that a plane falling from such height would suffer far greater damage than was evidenced by pictures of the remnants of the Powers' U-2. Aeronautical engineers have examined photographs of the remnants of four other U-2s which failed at 68,000 feet or above and find no appreciable difference between the condition of the remnants in each of these planes and the pictures of the Powers' U-2. This point was therefore dismissed by the experts.

One of the team of experts who studied the scientific aspects of the problem is here to answer your questions.

4. Conflicting intelligence

Conflicting intelligence which led to the speculation that Powers' plane descended gradually to an altitude of 35,000 or 40,000 feet has been examined.

As you will recall, there was considerable speculation in the press that Powers was not shot down at 68,000 feet but that his engine flamed out and he descended gradually and finally was shot down when he came within range of Soviet interceptors.

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But Bear in mind that the plane being 1300 miles inside of Russia was beyond the scope of the radar or other communications available to us. This information has been examined and reexamined by the Board of Inquiry who have reached the unanimous and positive conclusion

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the fact that this
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be accepted as dependable intelligence upon which Mr. Powers' story could be refuted. At this point I must point out to this committee who are sitting in executive session that the mere existence of this type of intelligence information is of the greatest sensitivity and must not be discussed outside of this room. Any discussion which would lead to disclosure to the Soviets would seriously affect our national interest. And I mention the subject most reluctantly and only because of press speculation at the time of the incident.

5. Polygraph test.

When Mr. Powers was confronted with this conflicting information, he requested, as the paper before you states, a polygraph test. He was under the polygraph for five hours -- an inordinately long time for a polygraph test. The test was conducted by the most expert polygraph operators in the Agency. The results were positive; there were no reactions which in the opinion of the experts could be interpreted as indicating that Mr. Powers was deviating from the truth with respect to any essential aspects of the inquiry including, of course, his story of the event which damaged his plane and the subsequent events during his descent. His insistence on subjecting himself to the polygraph and the results of the test have an important bearing on the conclusions of the Board.

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7. As has been reported, I appointed a Board of Inquiry to examine into this matter carefully and to report their findings to me. The Board was composed of three distinguished and knowledgeable citizens, retired Judge E. Barrett Prettyman, former Chief of the U.S. Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, General Harold R. Bull, a man of great experience in both military and intelligence matters, and John Bross, a very senior CIA staff officer of long experience, a legal background, and no previous direct connection with the U-2 project. The Board spent ten days studying all available facts and interrogating a ~~very~~ great number of witnesses and specialists, including Mr. Powers himself. They rendered a report to me and then I met for several hours with the Board to personally review the reasons for their conclusions and more particularly to examine into the conflict which I referred to earlier. The Board reached the conclusions stated in the final paragraphs of the paper before you. After a long and intense discussion with the Board and the consideration of all other information available to me at this time I concur in the findings of the Board.